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In Memoriam.

2
Lessons of the Hour.

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

ASSASSINATION OF

PRESIDENT GARFIELD,

DELIVERED IN THE SOUTH CHURCH,

SALEM, MASS.,

413
JULY 10, 1881.

BY REV. EDWARD S. ATWOOD, PASTOR.



SALEM, MASS.:

OBSERVER STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,
1881.

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SERMON.

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other."—Ecclesiastes vii., 14.

Some hundreds of miles to the southward, in a shaded and silent room, lies the President of the United States, with death on one side of the bed and life on the other, quarrelling as to which shall have him. It is a time and place of infinite issues to him personally. On the one hand, there is the possibility of a grave dug for him in the maturity of manhood, on whose headstone it will be no lying epitaph to write, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"; on the other hand, there is the possibility of many illustrious years to come, with increase of power and fame, the ruddy bud of promise opened into imperial blossom. It is still more a time and place of infinite issues to us as a people. The vast importance of this crisis no man can measure. The outcome of this sudden arrest, as the ship of state strikes on this unmapped rock, no prophet can foretell; God only knows. The report of the assassin's pistol, we are told, was loud and startling, but its sound was utter silence, compared with the resonance of events that inevitably succeed the attempted murder-stroke. In the days of prosperity we have

"been joyful" without stint; in the day of adversity that is upon us, it is imperative that we should sit down in its shadows and "consider."

It seems to me important that men should fasten their thoughts, first, on the truth which stands last in the text: prosperity and adversity. *God* hath set the one over against the other. It is not a blundering, lawless world, this world in which we live. History is not a game of chance, dependent upon the shuffling of the cards and the throw of the dice. An infinite *somebody* stands back of all its events and determines their occurrence. Human life and fortune to us is a fabric of tangled web, but there is *one* who knows all, *one* who sees the end from the beginning, and works out his matchless pattern according to the counsels of his own will. The nation, all too careless of this truth in the halcyon days in which it seemed to be drifting into prosperity on the crest of a tidal wave, or by sheer force of gravitation, has met with a sharp arraignment of its idle and empty philosophy, and has waked up to the fact that there is a God in the heavens. The millions who have been crushed to their knees in prayer by the sudden calamity; the secular journals which have substituted devout petitions for political criticisms; the great heart of the people lifted heavenward in asking, not assertion, as never before; these all are witness that the shadowy, sleepy admission that the *Lord reigns*, has suddenly taken on body and life. God is greatly more real to this people than a week ago. Our infinite helplessness,

his infinite helpfulness, how much we have learned about these things within the last seven days. Col. Ingersoll walks up and down the corridors of the White House, but no faintest whisper of his lucrative blasphemy disturbs the profound atmosphere of prayer in the Executive Mansion. The sad, sore heart of the nation cries out, "Woe are we if there be not a God." No conclusions of philosophy, no utterance of the schools, no assent of science, could so have reinvigorated into stalwartness the waning popular faith in the great Over Ruler, as the disaster that has forced us all to see that without God we have no hope in the world. As a people and as individuals, we are summoned to make that truth more closely and abidingly our own. Some thin flame of conviction, kindled by the heat of our necessities, flickering a moment and then gone out, is not enough. We must enthrone in our souls as the sovereign fact, that *God is*, and *God reigns*. All permanent righteousness depends upon that. The children of Israel were a vagrant and self-pleasing host till they stood where Sinai's rugged steeps shot up from the desolateness of the desert, and in the lightning that blazed, and the thunder that crashed, and the great voice like a trumpet that uttered itself in the cloudy summit, they recognized that God was making laws for them—laws sovereign, irreversible, inexorable. Our Sinai has been unveiled before us, this week, and not for the first time either. We have had emphasized the fact that *God reigns*, and that the methods of His

will transcend the theories of statesmanship and override the plottings of politicians, and that whatever allegiance we think we owe to our party, or our nation, our loyalty is due first and most of all to Him who setteth up one, and putteth down another. No patriotism is complete that does not compact itself around that confession. No private character is pure and sound and good, that does not have *obedience to God* as its core and centre. Wranglers in Congress and political speakers on the platform have had too much to say about party and constitution, and too little about Jehovah. It is well for us that the great deeps of our unconcern and forgetfulness have been broken up, even though the life blood from the veins of the great President has been selected as messenger to articulate the everlasting truth, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another." We have boasted that we were a prosperous people, a progressive people, a law-abiding people; but a single pistol shot fills the land with alarm and dismay, and wrenches us away from our trust in Presidents and Cabinets, who turn out to be men like ourselves, the creatures of yesterday and the dust of to-morrow. National righteousness is something more than loyalty to our leaders and our constitution. It comes, and comes to stay, and be a reality only as it comes through submission and service offered to Him who is more than earthly constitutions and leaders. It will not be of too great price, this punctuation point of blood, in

the history we are writing, if in its pause we discover the Great White Throne, and Him who sits upon it, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and so discover it and Him, that we bow in absolute allegiance to the Divine rule and Ruler.

“In the day of adversity, *consider*.” Few centuries and nations have been in more need of that injunction than our own. The advance of civilization in older lands has been like the rise of the tide, slow and stately; the progress of American civilization has been the swift, noisy, turbid flow of a torrent swollen by spring rains. Remember we have but little more than a century of national history behind us, and yet in elements of vitality, available force, and splendor of accomplishment, we stand abreast with nations that have had cycles for their growth. It is true that, as latest born of peoples, we are heirs of the wisdom of the past, warned by its mistakes and helped by its recorded experiments. But this is not the sufficient explanation of our rapid advance. They tell us that, on the slopes of Vesuvius, grass and flowers push into wonderful luxuriance, for, while summer heat rains down upon them from the azure concave of the Mediterranean sky, another summer stirs beneath them in the hot heart of the volcano. America has had the external quickening of the world’s experiments; it has had also the internal impulse of its own feverish and restless blood. In every department of our varied life, in the home, the school, the college, in business, in literature, in art, in science, there is the same impetu-

ous haste. The outcome of all this is marvellous enterprise, but it is not unmixed gain. Even in material matters, panic treads close on the heels of prosperity, and what is far worse, in our rash venturesomeness, some of the best and truest things are trodden out of sight as grass and grain are trampled under foot by the rush of a victorious army. The strict moralities of business, that make it an orderly attempt to adjust the balance between want and supply, are often overlooked, and trade becomes a greedy scramble of each one for himself. Statesmanship is left unstudied in the endeavor to gratify political ambition. Even religion tries to reach its desired results by short cuts and cross roads. The chronic crime of the American people is their *thoughtlessness*. We are re-enacting, in less intense but quite as mischievous fashion, the folly of France, under Louis XVI. We plan for to-day and to-morrow, as though day after to-morrow would never come—and day after to-morrow is the thing of most importance. So, much is projected in haste that has to be abandoned; so, much is done that were better undone; so, much time is spent in stopping ugly leaks, made by incautious haste, that were better spent in minding the helm and trimming the sails, that anything, come in what shape it may, that forces the nation to stop and *consider*, is so far a blessing. Energy is an excellency, and enthusiasm is to be welcomed in this lazy world; but there must be *thoughtfulness* to well direct both enthusiasm and energy, or

the better part of their force is wasted. The Merrimac, fed by a myriad streams from the shaggy mountains in the far north, comes southward brawling noisily in its shallowness, but Manchester and Lawrence and Lowell build their blockades of arrest across its current, till it grows still and deep—and then it puts its shoulder to the wheel of labor, and turns the thousands of humming spindles, and drives the shuttles that weave the web of prosperity for great cities. National fire and force need the curb and direction of wise consideration, and even adversity may cause an arrest of thoughtlessness, from which large good may come.

If now, in an hour of troubled expectancy and anxious waiting, we stop and consider, what facts unknown, or feebly recognized before, impress themselves upon our thought?

First of all, I think, is the *worth of Christian character*. In the loose talk of the street and the flippant utterances of the platform, it has not been credited with a high market value. It was well enough to be pious if one had a fancy for that sort of a thing, but after all there was a suspicion of unmanliness attaching to it. Young men looking about for their ideals for which to strive, selected eminent politicians, or successful business men, or famous scientists as their models. The matter of piety did not enter into their calculations. But look yonder into the President's sick room, and listen to the utterances that swarm in on the white wings of the newspapers from all

parts of the land. Bend your ear to that electric wire stretching a thousand leagues under the sea, and catch the words that are passing through it. What is the central chord around which all the harmonies are ranged? The *Christian* character, courage and faith of the sufferer. It is not that he is a statesman. There may be others who are his peers if not his superiors in that. It is not that he is eloquent. We have no lack of brilliant orators. It is not merely that he is President. There have been others in that high office for whom far fewer tears would have been shed. It is the *man*, brave but not defiant, submissive but not cowardly, so anxious to live that he would be willing to have a limb cut piece by piece from his body if so he might recover, and yet calmly saying, "God's will be done;" it is the *man, that man, that kind* of a man, whose calamity is the sorrow of all hearts. I doubt if all the pulpits of America, for the last twelve months, have so ennobled Christian character in the popular estimate, as that single sufferer in the silence of his sick room. It will be well for the young men of America, pondering plans of life and calculating the chances of success, to turn their faces toward that room. Religion in the abstract, as preached in sermons, has been pilloried in the lecture room, and sneered at in the laboratory, and ignored in the market place and on the sidewalk; but religion as personified in the head of the Great Republic, struck down in the early morning of his official greatness, without a moment's warning, and yet

calm, self poised, trusting in the Infinite Wisdom and Love—*that* religion is manifestly something so real, so controlling, so sublime, that the boldest skeptic dares not shoot the arrows of criticism towards it. I say it reverently, but I believe it is true, that never since the dying Christ so bore himself upon the cross that the heathen centurion confessed “truly this was the Son of God,” never has any man had opportunity given him to bear such world-wide witness to the truth of religion, as has been given to the head of this nation. And he has not been found wanting. In the sight of all the nations he has borne testimony to the power of the truth as it is in Jesus, and henceforth the small critics who evolve unbelief out of the shallowness of their own brains, will have this new evidence to refute. Let the nation see to it that in the future it do not forget, what in this hour of consideration it cannot overlook, that religion, the religion of the Gospel, is a reality, supreme and satisfying.

Still further, in this hour of thought we have got a new idea of the *dependence which may safely be placed upon the people*. Whatever may be true of other nations, the American Republic, though noisy and quarrelsome on the surface, is, at heart, as the heart of one man. We have our political differences and party names, and cliques within the party, but for all that are one. Your chemical solution is a ferment of unassimilating substances, but thrust into it a rod and all differences harmonize in crystallization about it. Thrust into

the wrangle of American politics, so hot and shrill-voiced sometimes, a great emergency like that which is upon us, and there is an instant crystallization of factions. We think better of humanity, or ought to, than we did a week ago. How magnificent the outburst of sympathy from all quarters, the South equally with the North trying to find words expressive enough to voice its sorrows and its hopes! The universal tenderness has uttered itself from all strata of society, and the burden of grief and the thrill of returning confidence has been felt by the young as well as the old. "Mikky," was the first greeting of a little boy to his playmate, as he sallied out in the street yonder at daylight on Monday last, wakened by the uproar of the nation's holiday, "Mikky, he is alive yet." We have our differences of religious creed, our bitter antagonisms of party; but, even seem to touch the integrity of the nation's life, and there is but one party and one creed. Scientists tell us that between the ultimate atoms of the most solid substance there is a film of separating atmosphere, but the cohesion is none the less perfect for all that. So in our government of the people by the people. Men have their separateness of ideas, but it does not impair their unity of purpose. The people are to be trusted. Like children, in idle times they have their quarrelsome moods; but let the stress of emergency come and they are granite. And how much more than American, how *human* this cohesion of brotherhood has been proved to be! The nations have

their representatives at each other's courts, with the jugglery of diplomacy or the sword thrust of threats, each guarding jealously its own rights; but a sorrow comes upon one, and all the rest at once turn comforters. Imperial England, crafty Germany, autocratic Russia, volatile France, continental empires, far off Japan, land of the sun rising, how from each and all the words of sympathy come singing along the wire over the land and under the sea, till that sick chamber at Washington seems the focus of the world's whispering gallery, where every nation is heard lamenting and comforting. The old dream of the brotherhood of men marches to its fulfilment. The truth that God has made of one blood all nations, is reaffirmed—and that unity asserts itself more and more strongly. It is but a step further to that unity in Christ, which is stronger than oneness of blood; and in this splendid witness to the lesser truth lies the promise in the near future of the greater and more glorious.

And certainly, while we consider, one other fact grows plain—the *weak spot of the Republic*, where, if anywhere, it is likely to snap when the strain comes—the *hungry greed for office*, which curses all classes of society, and the political lie that “to the victors *belong* the spoils.” It is time to affirm and reaffirm, and grave with a pen of iron in the rock forever, that no man has a right to demand position on account of his party affiliations. He may make himself fit for office by the breadth of his patriotism; he may earn a title to considera-

tion by services rendered to the whole land; but even then, it is not for him to seek the place, but to wait until the place seeks him. This organized system of begging and bribing, which is such an immense factor in American politics, is a devil that needs to be cast out. The mischief is everywhere. Ward room politicians, whose qualifications are surplus of brass and lack of brains, engineer city and town elections in their own interest and fancy they are great men. Other cliques manipulate states, and still others seem to think that the nation exists for their benefit, and snivel and stamp like angry boys if they can not have their way. The "spoils system" has weakened every party, continually given us unfit men for officials, and now has shot the President. It is more than a nuisance to be abated, it is an assassin to be gibbeted. In this hour of adversity the people will consider to little purpose if they do not insist on instant and utter reform in this matter. There should be wide room for honorable ambition, there should not be an inch of standing place for selfish political greed. Let the nation make short work with the beggars and harpies that block up the offices and lobbies of the capital, the washed and the unwashed alike offering their patriotic services "for a consideration." We have imperative occasion for beginning a reform which we ought to have begun long ago—a reform not tentative, timid, apologetic, as though ashamed or afraid of itself, but a reform, clear-voiced, heavy-handed, radical through and

through. Make it a fact, if not a law, that to ask for an office is the sure way not to get it; stamp lobbying as disreputable as swindling; and the land will be clear of a curse, that rots inward like a cancer, and whose touch of pain and fever has reached even the heart of the nation.

What is to be the outcome of the calamity to him who is the chief sufferer, no man can tell; but the morning light of hope, kindled along the horizon where all was black night a week ago, streams higher and higher towards the zenith. If the President live, who can doubt that it will be with chastened purposes, larger faithfulness, more thorough devotion to God. There are more things to be learned in that sick room than in the cabinet council, things finer, better worth knowing, than any trick of statesmanship. Out of the schooling of these slow-moving, anxious hours, there may come grace to rule that will make the disaster a blessing to us, and the crowding millions of the future. God grant that so it may be! is the prayer of all our hearts. But if—alas, that such an *if* is possible—but if that which seems to us best is not best, and so may not be; if the great President's work is done, and the weak fingers grow weaker still till the sceptre of authority drops from their powerless grasp, and we find ourselves facing an unwelcome future full of complications, about whose unsnarling we have no greater certainty than anxious surmise, still we may be of good courage. The people live, though the President dies; on them the burden rests always

and they have learned how to bear it. While they live and are true to their high mission "the government of the people, by the people, for the people, will not perish from the face of the earth." Yes, more than that, though there be possible days before us of doubt and trouble, when the cry of the nation is

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!"

Yet a mightier than the President will still live and reign.

"And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadows,
Keeping watch above his own."

Light on the Cloud.

A DISCOURSE

ON THE

DEATH OF

PRESIDENT GARFIELD,

DELIVERED IN THE SOUTH CHURCH,

SALEM, MASS.,

SEPTEMBER 25, 1881.

BY REV. EDWARD S. ATWOOD, PASTOR.

SALEM, MASS. :

OBSERVER STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,
1881.



SERMON.

“Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.—Psalm xcvii., 2.

For the second time in our national history, the American people assemble to-day in their houses of worship, under circumstances of special and momentous interest. The President is dead, and the long agony of suspense is over. The weeks of weary waiting during which the telegraph and the newspaper made every man a watcher by the bedside of the chief magistrate are ended. The voice of prayer that burdened the air with its importunity for the sufferer's life is hushed. The bulletins, whose varying messages of hope and fear stirred such conflicting feelings in the breasts of thousands, no longer fan the courage or depress the hearts of the people. The physicians are discharged from their faithful and tender ministry of help. The trains are no longer burdened with a nation's glad contribution of fancied appliances of relief. The sentries have been dismissed from their weary vigil about White House and seaside cottage. All human endeavor has been frustrated. The President is dead, and the world sits in mourning beside his grave.

The blow has cut sharply and struck deeply.

Could we lift to-day the horizon that limits our outlook, and make this church the high summit of national prospect what strange and touching sights would flash before our vision. The whole land is in the garb of mourning. The folds of blended sable and white hang in clouds from the cabin, the shop, the factory, the halls of justice, the council rooms of municipalities, the exchange. The sanctuaries of worship are draped with the emblems of sorrow. From every flag staff the national ensign droops at half mast, fringed with blackness. In the forests of Maine the cry of lamentation is heard above the sough of the winds through the pines, and the wailing rolls on and on the breadth of the continent, and adds its minor chord to the music of the waves that harp along the placid shores of the Pacific. Fifty millions of people plunged into common sorrow lift up their tear-stained faces to God, compelled to say "clouds and darkness are round about him"; not yet quite ready to say, "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

Whatever strictures may be made upon the unbelief of the times, it is beyond question that the conviction that *there is a God*, is a fundamental article in the faith of the American people. The events of the last few weeks sufficiently evidence it. The assembling of whole Commonwealths for prayer—the petitions that have gone up from thousands of churches and family altars, and secret places of communion with God, are

blessed and irrefutable witness to the fact that the nation believes in a great over-ruling Father and Friend. Even our calamity will not cause us to lose faith in God. The pressure that is upon us crowds us to questioning but not to infidelity. Is there any light discernible on the cloud? Is there any lesson of counsel or comfort to be learned from this strange and awful dispensation of Divine Providence?

It has certainly evidenced in the most positive and impressive manner *the stability of Republican institutions*. Much as we loved our President, we love our country more, and anything that strengthens our faith in its permanency and prosperity is so far a blessing. The impetuosity of our enterprise, and the splendor of our achievements, sometimes causes us to forget that our nationality is still young. There are veteran statesmen on the continent who have not yet got through with talking about the "American *experiment*." Both honest fears and idle sneers may be dismissed for the future. We are told that sometimes on the sea, in the belt of the trade winds, the smiling days come and go, when the braces need no handling and the captain may sleep in his cabin, and the helmsman nod at the wheel, and yet there is such serenity in wave and sky that the ship is safe. But this great nation stretching from shore to shore of a continent, in a time of intensest excitement has been for weeks without an official head, and yet there has been neither convulsion nor apprehension. The orderly processes

of justice have gone on after their quiet fashion, there have been no wild fluctuations in the money market, business has been shadowed with sadness but not smitten with paralysis, and the person and property of every man have been as secure as in the most monotonous times. It is a surprising spectacle unparalleled in the annals of history. If the President had lived, his wise administration would doubtless have strengthened the government, but his death with its attendant circumstances has shown the people as nothing else could, what pith and vigor there is in the fibre of our institutions, and so lays on them a fresh responsibility to keep sacred and defend from all harm the ordinances and methods inherited from the fathers.

And how can we ever thank God for *such an illustrious example of a noble life*—that suffered no tarnish but rather grew more resplendent in the damps of death. In a hot age like this when the masses go with the tide, or jump at conclusions if they think at all, there is nothing that is more wanted than symmetrical, healthy ideals of manhood impressive enough to inspire the multitudes with the desire and purpose to strive for them. It is not flattery or idle eulogy to say that our dead President was a conspicuous example of what a man should be. Born and cradled in poverty, necessity drove him to the work that later he learned to love. Ambitious to fill an honorable place in the world, he rose above the depression of his circumstances, and subsidized all the forces within his reach that would help him to his end.

He was not disdainful of humble toil. If fortune had not given him wings with which to soar to the greatness to which he aspired, courage and patience could build a ladder by which he might climb to the summit of his hopes. So we see him in his earlier days doing with his might what his hands found to do, not restless in his depressing surroundings, but "faithful in that which was least," so fitting under the slow burnish of trial to be "faithful in that which is greatest" when the appointed time should come, as come it surely does at last to all heroic souls. What lofty enthusiasms were nursed in secret during those initial years, what stamina of character was compacted by those early hardships, what fortitude was born and bred in him by that homely cabin life, we can only compute by noting how these high excellencies break out into radiance in the maturity of his manhood. In his case the old saying was eminently verified, "The child is father of the man."

Cured of the reckless fancies of his boyhood, that prompted him to follow the roving life of a sailor, he settled himself in the quieter paths of learning. The first taste of the sweets of knowledge in an humble Western institution, inspired this man, who from first to last believed in thoroughness, with a desire for broader culture, such as Eastern colleges afforded. All honor to Mark Hopkins, on whose white hairs so many other honors cluster, that his kindly heart prompted him to send words of welcome to the stranger boy, that

brought him to Massachusetts to receive in our own Commonwealth that liberal education of which he afterward made such splendid use. Williams College drilled him and armed him for his grand career. At twenty-five he was a Professor of wide repute in the West, and a little later the President of the institution where he began his work as a student. His prospect of eminence in the ranks of scholars was fair before him, but the common gravitation of able men in America towards public life drew him out of the quiet retreat of learning into the turbulent arena of politics. An acknowledged leader in the Senate of his state, he laid down his civic honors at the opening of the rebellion for the ruder experiences of the camp and battle. From the rank of Colonel to that of Major-General was an interval which he speedily crossed, and his strategic skill and brave demeanor in the last field on which he fought, gave him a place among the most eminent of military commanders.

In the wise ordinance of God, his ultimate fame and highest honors were not to be won by well directed cannon or victorious charges. The Commonwealth that knew him and trusted him, elected him as its representative in the councils of the nation. His great proto-martyr, President Lincoln, urged him to come to his aid in the hour of perplexity and peril, and he could not resist the call of duty which seemed to him always as the voice of God. From that hour onward his path has been as open as the noon day. What he was

and did has been known and read of all men. He had no selfish ends to serve, no subtleties of mean trickery to hide, no jugglery of partisanship to conceal, no purpose which he was not willing to hold up in the clear white light of day and let the world look at it. Political bitterness, often too wickedly unscrupulous, has tried at times to discredit the roundness and solidity of his character, but the asserted facts have bleached out into fancies, under the test of investigation, and the severest accusations have evaporated into the smoke of partisan rumor. Judged by any fair standards, no public man stands before the world with a cleaner record, than the man whose loss the world mourns. And so at last without causing or contriving on his part, he became the elect head of the nation. The popular instincts that recognized his fitness for the Presidency, and the popular suffrage that bestowed that high office upon him, were not in fault. As has recently been so well said of him: "He had occupied the position only a short time, but already he had impressed his character upon the administration in such a way as to cause good men to hope, and bad men to fear. Notwithstanding his long and conspicuous public services, his character had by no means been fully known and appreciated. It has been during the past bitter and sorrowful weeks that he has come to be understood, and, it may be said, that he has lived his best life and made his best history. During his short life he has fought successfully nearly

all the battles that are to be met with in this world. Poverty, danger, slander, temptation in its most alluring forms, he has met and vanquished always. But his greatest battle he has fought last, looking calmly and fearlessly into the eyes of death, and keeping him at bay until it seemed more than once that his strong will would conquer all.

Some words of his own are peculiarly applicable to himself: 'If there be one thing upon the earth that mankind love and admire better than another, it is a brave man, it is a man who dares to look the devil in the face and tell him he is a devil.' He has looked both death and the devil in the face, until the latter fled away, and the former has little of which to boast. He is dead, we say, but there are few who live as he does, and as he will forever. For weeks he has been a sacred thing, lifting humanity upward as no being except the Christ has ever done before. Such he will remain—above the touch of partisan defilement, an inspiration and a priceless heritage."

He was gifted with that rare, fine something which made men who had never seen him his personal friends. It is not the *President* whom we mourn to-day, so much as the man. Presidents can be had in any number for the asking; *men*, to whom hearts cleave, are not so plentiful. There is a shadow on all our hearthstones, and a sorrow in all our souls, not because we have exchanged one ruler for another, but because he whom we loved is dead. There is a sense of *personal loss*

that cannot be shaken off. Men of the most opposite party affiliations hang the portrait of the dead President in their windows and drape around it the emblems of sorrow. It is not our titular magistrate, but our "King Arthur" for whom we mourn, in our loyalty to whom affection and patriotism were so blended that it is hard to tell which was the thickest strand. It is this something in character, which more than all else distinguishes the born ruler. It is such gracious authority, such winning sovereignty, that submission to its leadership is a delight, and revolt from its claims is unnatural. And this intangible, undefinable but emphatically real something in the dead President, which so attached men to him, was not provincial in its scope. Its influence was not arrested and dissolved by the foam of the Eastern and Western oceans that wash the shores of our continent. When the Queen of Great Britain—God bless her for the kindliness of her womanhood and her measureless sympathy—when the Queen of Great Britain makes the lightning her right hand and stretches it across the sea to lay a wreath of blossoms on the President's coffin, no more significant tribute could be paid to his native right to authority and allegiance. We do well to pause in our mourning and offer thanks to God, for an event that proves so clearly that, for a little while, a *man* in the best sense of the word has been given us to rule over us. The fact will stand forever, starred and radiant in our history, that one of the world's elect has been sent us to sit in the high places of our national authority.

We should grossly misread the record if we failed to note that *religious character*, more than native strength or cultured ability, was the secret of the brilliant record on this brief, bright page of our history. Faith in God and a vivid consciousness of responsibility to him, underlaid the great successes of this man's life. It is a lesson which this people greatly needs to learn—a lesson for which even universal sorrow is not too costly a tuition fee to pay. The claims of God, recognized and revered in private conduct, in social life, in the administration of government, this attitude of soul is the omnipotent factor of success. Rank, wealth, eloquence, statesmanship, what do they all amount to in the final issue? “Hitch your wagon to a star,” Mr. Emerson once said, if you wish to be drawn to the goal of your hopes. *Tie your soul to God*, is the simpler and surer formula for securing prosperity. It is well that this great man has both lived and died that the people may learn how true that is. He is an illustrious example of the fact that piety sometimes gains the prize which political dexterity misses. His career is a most impressive sermon on the *profit* of godliness. He did not burrow for office after the mole-like fashion of professional politicians, his soul was not up for sale to the highest bidder in caucus and convention; he did not make capital of emergencies to serve personal ends; he would not prostitute his conscience though ever so great price might be offered for the moral harlotry; he cared for God, and so God took care of him. His

death in the fullness of his fame, with all its shadows has its side of blessing, since it so emphatically preaches to the nation of the value of faith and obedience and a consecrated life. This is the largest, truest teaching of our calamity. It will be well for the nation if it recognizes it, accepts it, acts upon it. Let the benign influence of that conviction impress itself upon our laws and institutions; let it be fixed as the centre of crystallization, about which the discordant elements in the remoter territories are to aggregate themselves in the building up of the state; let it spur statesmanship to make its supreme endeavors along the lines of righteousness; let it rebuke with its serene and sovereign majesty the partisan and private scramble for place and power, and substitute for greedy and selfish purposes the ambition to deserve well of God, and in no far future looking with wiser eyes on this sorrow that to-day seems shrouded in such impenetrable blackness, and looking to God, by whose permission it comes, the chastened heart of the people will be able to say out of ripened experience, "Clouds and darkness are round about him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

It will be something more than strange also, if out of this rupture of our plans, and this disappointment of our hopes, a better compacted and more enduring nationality fails to come. In a Republic opposing parties are inevitable. Sympathetic shades of thought will of necessity associate

themselves together, and their colors be fixed in organization to aid what is considered the wisest governmental policy. In the nature of the case all men cannot agree upon political theories and methods, and so are sure to array themselves against each other and try the issue with arguments and votes. But this may be done without acid criticism and cruel strictures of each others' motives and purposes. The libertinism of what is called free speech, during a political canvass, has been an amazing feature in American history. Men seem to have forgotten that assassination of character by false charges, is as murderous as the thrust of the knife or the stroke of the bullet. In this hour of common sorrow we are not in the mood of recrimination; no party berates its opponents with hard names, no section accuses the others of treason. Is it too much to hope that men who have wept and prayed together in the Gethsemane of a mutual affliction will have learned each others hearts so well as to be sparing in the future of ungenerous taunts and campaign falsehoods? The President will not have died in vain, if over his grave men learn to discuss their political differences without personal malignity, and parties pleading for power before the high court of the people, be content to win or lose the verdict as the worse or better reason shall be judged to be on their side. You have seen on a summer afternoon the black and threatening cloud overspread the sky, and under its shadow all was hush and darkness, but when the cloud had emptied

itself of its lightnings and poured its floods upon the earth, each dry and withered thing which had drooped in the blazing heat was quickened into freshness and beauty, the petals of the blossoms glossed themselves with finer color and their breath of fragrance drifted through the air, and the cloud itself, its fury spent, and its blackness transfigured in the sunset light, became a canopy of purple and scarlet, that roofed with its splendor, a renewed and rejoicing earth. It *may* be, God send that it *prove* to be, that this cloud hanging vast and portentous over the nation's head to-day, has already spent its wildest rage, and that the calm after the storm is at hand, when the forsaken faults and chastened character and firmer welded loyalty of the people shall dower the nation with new dignity and strength, and the calamity itself so crushing in its onset, seen through the perspective of time and in the light of what it has accomplished, shall be recognized as an illuminated page, unrolled by God's hand that he might write on it the fullest message of love and instruction, which he has ever sent to this favored people.

And so as we look up into the face of God to-day and say "Clouds and darkness are round about him," we are to remember that they are about *Him*, the great source and centre of the world's light and joy. The shadows that enrap him are fleeting, the sunshine of his presence is eternal. His power controls and his wisdom guides. His purposes concerning this nation have suffered no sudden, unexpected shock. They will

move on in unruffled serenity to their fulfilment. Afloat on their mighty tide, this afflicted people will be borne to the provided and prepared haven. Even the shadows are in part the making of our own weakness.

“We see but dimly through the fogs and vapors
Amid these earthly damps:
What seem to *us*, but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven’s distant lamps.”

Brush away the tears of grief and distrust and fear, and to our kindled and quickened vision at this sorrowful “even time it shall be light.”

We give one more day after this memorable Sabbath to sad and solemn ceremonial in honor of our illustrious dead, and then we are to take up again our march of service and duty. We are to away with faint heartedness. Righteousness and justice are the habitation of the throne of Him who holds us in the hollow of his hand. With chastened pride but unquestioning faith the nation is to move on along the historic course, that stretches broad and clear before it. All will be well if as we go, our aims are unselfish, our purposes pure, our fidelity unwearied, and the lips of all the people move with the utterance of the prayer that belts with the simplicity and fervor of its faith, the seal of the metropolis of this ancient and honored Commonwealth, a prayer on which lies the light of two worlds “As God was with our fathers, so may he be with us.”



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